(b) whether the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) in its annual report blamed this on change in fiscal priorities evidenced in the respective stimulus programmes designed to cope with the economic slowdown;

(c) whether States have also announced a number of policy initiatives in their 2009-10 budget by directing expenditure towards economic revival; and

(d) if so, the other main reasons for not achieving the fiscal targets and the suggestions made by RBI in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) RBI has noted that the State Governments' efforts at fiscal correction and consolidation in terms of the path of fiscal restructuring prescribed by the Twelfth Finance Commission (TFC) and targets fixed under their respective Fiscal Responsibility Legislation (FRL) suffered some setback during 2008-09.

(b) RBI has attributed the aforementioned setback to change in fiscal priorities that became necessary to accommodate additional expenditure to support fiscal stimulus in the face of shortfalls in revenue on account of the overall economic slowdown. Under the Debt Consolidation and Relief Facility, States were required to eliminate revenue deficit by 2008-09 and reduce fiscal deficit to 3% of Gross State Domestic Product (GSDP) by 2008-09. Keeping the special circumstances in view, Government of India subsequently relaxed these requirements for 2008-09 as follows: elimination of revenue deficit was shifted to 2009-10 and the fiscal deficit target was raised from 3% to 3.5% of GSDP. The States were advised to suitably amend their FRLs.

(c) Yes, Sir.

(d) In its 2008-09 annual report, RBI has cited on-going global economic turmoil as the main reason for States not achieving fiscal targets. RBI has suggested curbing of wasteful expenditure and expenditure reorientation towards more productive expenditure, specific rules for debt and expenditure apart from focus on deficits, transparency in budgetary operations, exploration of counter-cyclical fiscal policy frame-work. For 2009-10, the Government of India has further relaxed the fiscal deficit target to 4% of the States' respective GSDP under Debt Consolidation and Relief Facility, and the requirement of elimination of revenue deficit for 2009-10 has also been relaxed.

Purchase of Aircrafts by Air India

†*369. SHRI PRAKASH JAVADEKAR:
SHRI PRABHAT JHA:

Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Air India has placed orders to purchase 111 aircrafts?

(b) if so, the details of aircrafts delivered so far, out of them; and

(c) the number of aircrafts which have still not been used for passenger services even after their delivery along with the reasons therefor?

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. Out of 111 aircraft ordered, Air India has taken the delivery of 68 aircraft till date. This includes 9 B777-300ER, 8 B777-200LR, 17 each of A321, A319 aircraft and 17 B737-800 aircrafts. However, Air India has deferred delivery of 3 B777-300ER and the delivery of 27 B787 is delayed beyond 2011.

(c) All the aircraft delivered are being operated for scheduled flights.

Universal Safety Oversight Audit Programme

*370. SHRI NAND KUMAR SAI: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) has offered any project for flight safety, aerodromes and air navigation services under their Universal Safety Oversight Audit Programme;

(b) if so, the details in this regard;

(c) whether Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) has delayed the project to address the deficiencies detected during the ICAO audit;

(d) if so, the details thereof and the reasons therefor; and

(e) by when India will be able to implement the corrective actions based on ICAO audit recommendations and strengthening of the DGCA?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): (a) and (b) Approval has been granted to Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) for seeking technical cooperation of International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO) in the identified areas of safety oversight *viz.* flight safety, aerodromes ad air navigation.

(c) No, Sir.

(d) Does not arise.

(e) Two ICAO projects relating to enhancement of safety oversight capability in areas of flight safety and aerodromes are for a period of 6 months each. The third project on establishment of safety oversight capability in the area of air navigation services is for one year.

Fresh Investment By Gail

†*371. SHRI LALIT KISHORE CHATURVEDI:
DR. GYAN PRAKASH PILANIA:

Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Gas Authority of India Limited (GAIL) has sanctioned investment of Rs.8000 crores in July, 2009 to enhance the previous and existing capacity of new pipelines;

(b) the details of the places where new pipelines will be laid and extension undertaken therewith;

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†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.